

President, Board of Directors:
Jack Malone



Chief Executive Officer:
Carrie Dyer

House Bill 5596 and Senate Bill 1022 An Act Concerning Telehealth

Public Hearing:
The Insurance & Real Estate and Public Health Committees
March 15, 2021

Good morning Senator Lesser, Senator Abrams, Representative Wood, Representative Steinberg, Senator Hwang, Senator Somers, Representative Pavalock-D'Amato, Representative Petit and members of the Insurance & Real Estate and Public Health Committees:

My name is Carrie Dyer and I am the Chief Executive Officer of Reliance Health in Norwich. We provide a variety of mental health services throughout Eastern Connecticut serving over 1,500 individuals each year. The majority of our services are funded through the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and Department of Developmental Services. Our Outpatient Services Department, however, is supported solely by billing with the majority of claims being covered by Medicaid.

At this time last year, we were rapidly adapting to the nuances of the pandemic. With safety in mind, we created a hybrid for therapy sessions inclusive of providing audio and video therapy. With the support of the Federal Communication Commission (FCC), we secured funds to purchase tablets for our clientele to increase access to telehealth options. This option works for some, but in many cases, access to internet is beyond the financial reach of those we serve; therefore, having the ability to provide the options for in-person, audio-only, and video creates a flexible range of offerings to adapt to the needs of the individual and their safety.

When working with individuals with chronic mental health and addiction diagnoses, being flexible is critically important. Telehealth reduces isolation, sustains meaningful connections, and allows for the continuation of treatment goals while diminishing exposure risks, eliminating travel constraints, and providing a meaningful avenue for continuation of critical healthcare support. Please support House Bill 5596 and Senate Bill 1022 to codify the expansion of telehealth services for Connecticut's Medicaid recipients.

Thank you for your consideration.

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